

State of California  
BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

**DIESEL FUEL TAX REGULATIONS**

**Regulation 1470. RECORDS.**

*Reference:* Revenue and Taxation Code Sections 60201, 60503, 60604, 60605, and 60606.

**(a) DEFINITIONS.**

(1) "Database Management System" means a software system that controls, relates, retrieves, and provides accessibility to data stored in a database.

(2) "Electronic data interchange" or "EDI technology" means the computer to computer exchange of business transactions in a standardized structured electronic format.

(3) "Hardcopy" means any document, record, report or other data maintained in a paper format.

(4) "Machine-sensible record" means a collection of related information in an electronic format. Machine-sensible records do not include hardcopy records that are created or recorded on paper or stored in or by a storage-only imaging system such as microfilm or microfiche.

(5) "Taxpayer" means every interstate user, supplier, exempt bus operator, government entity, ultimate vendor, highway vehicle operator, train operator, and every person dealing in, removing, transporting, or storing diesel fuel in this state.

**(b) GENERAL.**

(1) A taxpayer shall maintain and make available for examination on request by the Board or its authorized representative, all records necessary to determine the correct diesel fuel tax liability and all records necessary for the proper completion of diesel fuel tax returns. Such records include but are not limited to:

**(A)** Normal books of account ordinarily maintained by the average prudent businessperson engaged in the activity in question.

**(B)** Bills, receipts, invoices, cash register tapes, or other documents of original entry supporting the entries in the books of account.

**(C)** Schedules or working papers used in connection with the preparation of tax returns.

(2) Machine-sensible records are considered records under Revenue and Taxation Code Sections 60604, 60605, and 60606.

**(c) MACHINE-SENSIBLE RECORDS.**

(1) GENERAL.

**(A)** Machine-sensible records used to establish tax compliance shall contain sufficient source document (transaction-level) information so that the details underlying the machine-sensible records can be identified and made available to the Board upon request. A taxpayer has discretion to discard duplicated records and redundant information provided the integrity of the audit trail is preserved and the responsibilities under this regulation are met.

**(B)** At the time of an examination, the retained records must be capable of being retrieved and converted to a standard magnetic record format e.g., Extended Binary Coded Decimal Interchange Code (EBCDIC) or American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) flat file.

**(C)** Taxpayers are not required to construct machine-sensible records other than those created in the ordinary course of business. A taxpayer who does not create the electronic equivalent of a traditional paper document in the ordinary course of business is not required to construct such a record for tax purposes.

(2) ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE REQUIREMENTS.

**(A)** Where a taxpayer uses electronic data interchange (EDI) processes and technology, the level of record detail, in combination with other records related to the transactions, must be equivalent to that

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contained in an acceptable paper record. For example, the retained records should contain such information as vendor name, invoice date, product description, quantity purchased, price, amount of tax, indication of tax status (e.g., for resale), and shipping detail. Codes may be used to identify some or all of the data elements, provided the taxpayer maintains a method which allows the Board to interpret the coded information.

**(B)** The taxpayer may capture the information necessary to satisfy subdivision (c)(2)(A) at any level within the accounting system and need not retain the original EDI transaction records provided the audit trail, authenticity, and integrity of the retained records can be established. For example, a taxpayer using EDI technology receives electronic invoices from its suppliers. The taxpayer decides to retain the invoice data from completed and verified EDI transactions in its accounts payable system rather than to retain the EDI transactions themselves. Since neither the EDI transaction nor the accounts payable system capture information from the invoice pertaining to product description and vendor name (i.e., they contain only codes for that information), the taxpayer must also retain other records, such as its vendor master file and product code description lists, and make them available to the Board. In this example, the taxpayer need not retain its EDI transaction for tax purposes.

(3) Electronic Data Processing Systems Requirements. The requirements for an electronic data processing (EDP) accounting system should be similar to that of a manual accounting system, in that an adequately designed accounting system should incorporate methods and records that will satisfy the requirements of this regulation.

**(4) BUSINESS PROCESS INFORMATION.**

**(A)** Upon request of the Board, the taxpayer shall provide a description of the business process that created the retained records. Such description shall include the relationship between the records and the tax documents prepared by the taxpayer and the measures employed to ensure the integrity of the records.

**(B)** The taxpayer shall be capable of demonstrating:

1. the functions being performed as they relate to the flow of data through the system;
2. the internal controls used to ensure accurate and reliable processing and;
3. the internal controls used to prevent unauthorized addition, alternation, or deletion of retained records.

**(C)** The following specific documentation is required for machine sensible records retained pursuant to this regulation:

1. record formats or layouts;
2. filed definitions (including the meaning of all codes used to represent information);
3. file descriptions (e.g., data set name); and
4. detailed charts of accounts and account descriptions

**(d) MACHINE-SENSIBLE RECORDS MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**

(1) The taxpayer's computer hardware or software shall accommodate the extraction and conversion of retained machine-sensible records to a standard magnetic record format as provided in subdivision (c)(1)(B).

(2) The Board recommends but does not require that taxpayers refer to the National Archives and Record Administration's (NARA) standards for guidance on the maintenance and storage of electronic records, such as the labeling of records, the location and security of the storage environment, the creation of back-up copies, and the use of periodic testing to confirm the continued integrity of the records.

**(e) ACCESS TO MACHINE-SENSIBLE RECORDS.**

(1) The manner in which the Board is provided access to machine-sensible records may be satisfied through a variety of means that shall take into account a taxpayer's facts and circumstances through consultation with the taxpayer.

(2) Such access will be provided in one or more of the following manners:

**(A)** The taxpayer may arrange to provide the Board with the hardware, software, and personnel resources to access the machine-sensible records.

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(B) The taxpayer may arrange for a third party to provide the hardware, software, and personnel resources necessary to access the machine-sensible records.

(C) The taxpayer may convert the machine-sensible records to a standard record format specified by the Board, including copies of files, on a magnetic medium that is agreed to by the Board.

(D) The taxpayer and the Board may agree on other means of providing access to the machine-sensible records.

**(f) TAXPAYER RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY.**

(1) In conjunction with meeting the requirements of subdivision (c), a taxpayer may create files solely for the use of the Board. For example, if a data base management system is used, it is consistent with this regulation for the taxpayer to create and retain a file that contains the transaction-level detail from the data base management system and that meets the requirements of subdivision (c). The taxpayer should document the process that created the separate file to show the relationship between that file and the original records.

(2) A taxpayer may contract with a third party to provide custodial or management services of the records. Such a contract shall not relieve the taxpayer of its responsibilities under this regulation.

**(g) HARDCOPY RECORDS**

(1) Except as specifically provided, taxpayers are not relieved of the responsibility to retain hardcopy records that are created or received in the ordinary course of business as required by existing law and regulations. Hardcopy records may be retained on a record keeping medium as provided in subdivision (h).

(2) If hardcopy transaction level documents are not produced or received in the ordinary course of transacting business (e.g., when the taxpayer uses electronic data interchange technology), such hardcopy records need not be created.

(3) Hardcopy records generated at the time of a transaction using a credit or debit card must be retained unless all the details necessary to determine correct tax liability relating to the transaction are subsequently received and retained by the taxpayer in accordance with the regulation. Such details include those listed in subdivision (c)(2)(A).

(4) Computer printouts that are created for validation, control, or other temporary purposes need not be retained.

**(h) ALTERNATIVE STORAGE MEDIA.**

(1) For purposes of storage and retention, taxpayer may convert hardcopy documents received or produced in the normal course of business and required to be retained under this regulation to storage-only imaging media such as microfilm or microfiche and may discard the original hardcopy documents, provide the conditions of this subdivision are met. Documents which may be stored on these media include, but are not limited to general books of account, journals, voucher registers, general and subsidiary ledgers, and supporting records of detail, such as sales invoices, purchase invoices, exemption certificates, and credit memoranda.

(2) Storage-only imaging media such as microfilm and microfiche systems shall meet the following requirements.

(A) Documentation establishing the procedures for converting the hardcopy documents to the storage-only imaging system must be maintained and made available on request. Such documentation shall, at a minimum, contain a sufficient description to allow an original document to be followed through the conversion system as well as internal procedures established for inspection and quality assurance.

(B) Procedures must be established for the effective identification, processing, storage, and preservation of the stored documents and for making them available for the period they are required to be retained under subdivision (i).

(C) Upon request by the Board, a taxpayer must provide facilities and equipment for reading, locating, and reproducing any documents maintained on storage-only imaging media.

(D) When displayed on such equipment or reproduced on paper, the documents must exhibit a high degree of legibility and readability. For this purpose, legibility is defined as the quality of a letter or numeral that enables the observer to identify it positively and quickly to the exclusion of all other letters or numerals.

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Readability is defined as the quality of a group of letters or numerals being recognizable as words or complete numbers.

**(E)** All data on storage-only imaging media must be maintained and arranged in a manner that permits the location of any particular record.

**(F)** There is no substantial evidence that the storage-only imaging medium lacks authenticity or integrity.

**(i) RECORD RETENTION-TIME PERIOD.** All records required to be retained under this regulation must be preserved for a period of not less than four years unless the State Board of Equalization authorizes in writing their destruction within a lesser period.

**(j) RECORD RETENTION LIMITATION AGREEMENTS**

(1) The Board has the authority to enter into or revoke a record retention limitation agreement with the taxpayer to modify or waive any of the specific requirements in this regulation. A taxpayer's request for an agreement must specify which records (if any) the taxpayer proposes not to retain and provide the reasons for not retaining such records, as well as proposing any other terms of the requested agreement. The taxpayer shall remain subject to all requirements of this regulation that are not modified, waived, or superseded by a duly approved record retention limitation agreement.

**(A)** If a taxpayer seeks to limit its retention of machine-sensible records, the taxpayer may request a record retention limitation agreement, which shall;

1. document understandings reached with the Board, which may include, but are not limited to, any one or more of the following issues:
  - a. the conversion of files created on an obsolete computer system;
  - b. restoration of lost or damaged files and the actions to be taken;
  - c. use of taxpayer computer resources, and
2. specifically identify which of the taxpayer's records the Board determines are not necessary for retention and which the taxpayer may discard, and
3. authorize variances, if any, from the normal provisions of this regulation.

**(B)** The Board shall consider a taxpayer's request for a record retention limitation agreement and notify the taxpayer of the actions to be taken.

**(C)** The Board's decision to enter or not to enter into a record retention limitation agreement shall not relieve the taxpayer of the responsibility to keep adequate and complete records supporting entries shown on any tax or information return.

(2) A taxpayer's record retention practices shall be subject to evaluation by the Board when a record retention limitation agreement exists. The evaluation may include a review of the taxpayer's relevant data processing and accounting systems with respect to EDP systems, including systems using EDI technology.

**(A)** The Board shall notify the taxpayer of the results of any evaluation, including acceptance or disapproval of any proposals made by the taxpayer (e.g., to discard certain records) or any changes considered necessary to bring the taxpayer's practices into compliance with this regulation.

**(B)** Since the evaluation of a taxpayer's record retention practices is not directly related to the determination of tax reporting accuracy for a particular period or return, an evaluation made under this regulation is not an "examination of records" pursuant to Revenue and Taxation Code Section 60606.

**(C)** Unless otherwise specified, an agreement shall not apply to accounting and tax systems added subsequent to the completion of the record evaluation. All machine-sensible records produced by a subsequently added accounting or tax system shall be retained by the taxpayer in accordance with this regulation until a new evaluation is conducted by the Board.

**(D)** Unless otherwise specified, an agreement made under this subdivision shall not apply to any person, company, corporation, or organization that, subsequent to the taxpayer's signing of a record retention limitation agreement, acquires or is acquired by the taxpayer. All machine-sensible records produced by the acquired or the acquiring person, company, corporation, or organization, shall be retained pursuant to this regulation.

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(3) In addition to the record retention evaluation under subdivision (j)(2), the Board may conduct tests to establish the authenticity, readability, completeness, and integrity of the machine-sensible records retained under a record retention limitation agreement. The Board shall notify the taxpayer of the results of such tests. These tests may include the testing of EDI and other procedures and a review of the internal controls and security procedures associated with the creation and storage of the records.

**(k) FAILURE TO MAINTAIN RECORDS.** Failure to maintain and keep complete and accurate records will be considered evidence of negligence or intent to evade the tax and may result in penalties or other appropriate administrative action.

**(l) SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS.**

(1) **VENDOR'S RECORDS.** A vendor shall maintain complete records of all sales or other dispositions including exemption certificates, self consumed fuel, inventories, purchases, receipts, and tank gaugings or meter readings, of diesel and any other fuel the use of which is subject to the diesel fuel tax.

(2) **VENDOR'S SALES INVOICES.** The vendor shall prepare a serially numbered invoice for each sale of fuel whether the fuel is sold for use in motor vehicles or for other uses. A single invoice covering multiple deliveries of fuel made during a period of time not to exceed a calendar month shall constitute an invoice for each sale. If the multiple delivery invoice includes tax-exempt deliveries with respect to which the vendor is excused from collecting the tax, and deliveries upon which the tax is required to be collected, the invoice shall contain or be accompanied by a statement showing separately the deliveries and gallonage upon which the tax is collected and the tax-exempt deliveries and gallonage. The invoice shall be delivered to the purchaser, and a copy thereof shall be retained by the vendor.

A sales invoice shall contain the following information:

- (A)** The name and address of the vendor.
- (B)** The name of the purchaser with respect to:
- (C)** The date of sale.
- (D)** The number of gallons of fuel sold, the price per gallon and the total amount of the sale.
- (E)** The amount of the diesel fuel tax collected; however, the amount of the tax collected need not be separately stated if the invoice bears the notation that the price includes the tax.
- (F)** A statement that there is no evidence of dye.

(3) **RECEIPT FOR TAX PAID TO VENDOR.** The sales invoice shall upon payment by the purchaser constitute a receipt for the amount of diesel fuel tax included therein collected by the vendor.

(4) **USER'S RECORDS.** The user shall maintain complete records of self consumed fuel, inventories, purchases, receipts, and tank gaugings or meter readings, of diesel and any other fuel the use of which is subject to the diesel fuel tax.

(5) **USER'S INVOICES.** Users of fuel subject to the tax shall obtain from the vendor of the fuel and retain in their files an invoice for each delivery of such fuel into the fuel tank or tanks of each vehicle operated by them and for each delivery into their bulk storage tank or tanks. These invoices shall set forth the information specified in subsection (l)(2) of this regulation and shall be filed or identified in a systematic manner so that they may readily be traced into their purchase or expense records and into their returns to the Board.

Users should keep as part of their records a detail of figures upon which are based the totals set forth on their returns to the Board. All individual invoices supporting charge accounts which include purchases of fuel shall be retained by the user in such manner as to enable the representatives of the Board to establish the identity of all the merchandise or service included in the total charge and the specific gallonage of fuel purchased.

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